

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

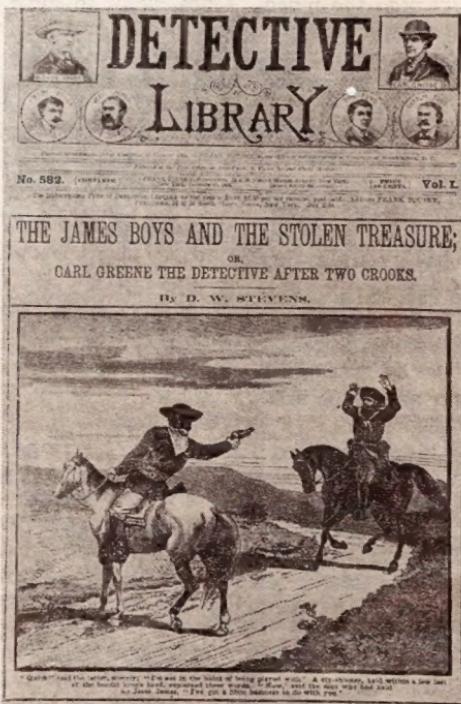
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Dime Novels In Cartoons

By Gerald J. McIntosh



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 85

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Began in 1883 featuring detective stories. Used new stories and reprints from the Frank Tousey story papers. Later issues featured stories of the James Boys and bore salmon colored covers in contrast to the early issues in black and white. Lasted for 801 issues until April 1, 1898. Early numbers were 11½x8½. Later issues were enlarged to 12¾x9, 32 pages, price, 10c per copy. Old King Brady made his first appearance in #154 and was featured in many stories until the end. His adventures were continued in Secret Service until 1925.

Dime Novels In Cartoons

By Gerald J. McIntosh

J. R. ("Jim") Williams, who drew thousands of cartoons for the News-paper Enterprise Association (NEA) Service, Inc., from 1922 until his death in June of 1957 in his block "Out Our Way" was a reader of Tip Top Weekly and the Merriwell stories. Ralph Smith tells us in his Happy Hours Magazine No. 5 back in 1925, Williams remembered the days he was chastised for reading wild and wooly novels, but that Tip Top always passed the family censor.

Williams occasionally used the much scorned dime novel as a theme for some of his drawings. He had a sort of a pattern that he followed in the grouping of his subjects. There was the "Worry Wart," "Heroes Are Made, Not Born," "Why Mothers Get Gray," "The Bull of the Woods" and others. His "Born Thirty Years Too Soon" and "Moments We'd Like To Live (and Wouldn't Like To Live) Over" provoked a nostalgia that was genuinely amusing, reminding us of the pranks and perils of our own youth, many of us having "been there" long ago in just such scenes as he pictured when life was young and gay.

He pictured life in a machine shop such as he had followed in his early days. His vocations were many and varied, such as from coal-heaver to prize fighter, lumberjack and cowboy, until he settled down to his career as a comic illustrator.

My favorite characters in his drawings were those of Curly, the cowboy and half a dozen of his pals on a ranch presumably somewhere in New Mexico. Mostly their adventures were humorous, but sometimes serious. A drawing back in the 1920's shows Cur-

ly and his pals ordered by the ranch mistress to give the bunkhouse a thorough cleaning out. The resulting pile of stuff they garnered from under the bunk mattresses and other places in a heap on the floor shows a newspaper with news of the blowing up of the Maine in Havana harbor and alongside it a copy of "Old Sleuth."

Artist Williams leaned upon the dime novel angle when he drew some of his cartoons in the Born Thirty Years Too Soon series, some of which I am lucky to have. An amusing one is an old grandpa westerner sitting on the edge of the porch addressing four kids dressed as Indians and soldiers. "Why," he says, "Kit Carson was a very soft-spoken person, kinda short bandy legged feller. I saw him in Taos many times. Where'd you kids get the idee he was a big, bellerin' loudmouth? Oh, out o' them things—bah, no wonder!" And he was waving in his left hand a dime novel of the west one of the kids had given him to look at. In another scene a mother has caught her young son in bed reading late at night. She remarked she thought he had been burning a lot of oil lately. "Hand me that 'Diamond Dick' or 'James Boys' or 'Old King Brady' or whatever it is you are reading. Dig it up!" Another shows two boys one of which has hidden his dime novels in the gutter. There came a sudden rain and the novels plugged the drain. Mother is ascending a ladder to investigate, which will be too bad for the boys. A boy has hidden his novels in a bird house on the roof next to his upstairs room but the extra large hole the youth had to cut in the tiny structure in order to

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shove the novels inside has aroused the suspicions of his mother at the top of the ladder who finds the paperbacks inside. A youth is poking thru a trash pile into which his nickel novel or comic book has "accidentally" been discarded. Still in another place in a dark room a youth is seen reading a Nick Carter by the light that streams through a key hole. With two boys, one as Sherlock Holmes and as the "proof reader" shows his brother, Dr. Watson, the signs of and how he solved the mystery of the latter's way of how he dodged upstairs and of how he managed to get into bed without washing the dishes and cleaning himself up also.

These are a few I have. Others include "When Buffalo Bill Came To Town," showing the old Scout in his western regalia leading the parade that was held preceding the wild west show performance. Williams also drew a cartoon on the 101 Ranch Wild West show, and shown were the three Miller brothers, Joe, George and Zach, with the circus tent in background along with some of their Indians, Cow Boys and Cossacks. As a boy I saw Buffalo Bill in his show parade, also the parade of the 101 Ranch wild west show. Those, my friends, are indeed "Moments I'd Like To Live Over." In a last western theme cartoon I have that was drawn in 1922 titled "A Glorious Moment," a circus cowboy is shown on the circus grounds back of the wild west show tent giving a bare-footed, straw-hatted urchin a ride on his bronc, with Indians watching in the background. It must indeed have been "a glorious moment" for the boy.

The best of the cartoons that came from the drawing-board of Jim Williams from the dime novel angle I thought was the one published in 1928 and reprinted in January, 1959, which is so aptly described by Ralph Smith in his Happy Hours Magazine No. 19 wherein he says: "Cartoon NEA Service, by J. R. Williams in Out Our Way. Father reading 'James Boys In Old Missouri.' Mother reading a Frank Merriwell in Tip Top. Son sitting be-

fore the stove, reading nothing. Father says: 'Why, I don't see any reason for boys not readin' these novels. I find this very exciting and absorbing.' Mother says: 'Well, I can't see either. This Frank Merriwell is a very manly fellow. Just rescued a girl and thrashed three ruffians who were annoying her.' Son says very soft: 'Them? I hain't read them yet. I ain't had a chance! No wonder th' kids read 'em out in barns and places!'" That's a pretty good way of telling about the picture, but nobody can describe the woe-be-gone look on the face of the boy deprived of his favorites, sitting there beside the dog lying alongside the pot-bellied hot stove.

Of the various subjects Williams presented in his series of cartoons, those on the cowboys I liked best. The antics of "Curly," "Cotton," "Stiffy," the old cow hand, "Big Ick" the negro, "Wes," the easterner turned cowboy, and "Sugar," the cook were amusing and genuinely entertaining. Occasionally a bit of western verse appropriate to the drawing made the illustrated adventure more entertaining.

Year after year I saved these cartoons finally making into half a dozen nice scrap books after I retired. I also had a couple of fine cloth bound books of Williams' drawings, one of which was autographed by him. Wondering what would become of all my stuff like this if left behind here and casting about for a place where it might be kept for "posterity" I gave all this stuff and a lot more of a like nature to the great Western Heritage Center Library at the National Cow Boy Hall of Fame at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma where it now reposes. I gave them in all more than a thousand items of a western theme, historical books of the west, magazines, pictures, postcards, newspaper clippings and a few western dime novels. There can be seen also a complete set of C. F. Bragin's dime novel club reprints and sets of the Tip Top Weekly (Merriwell) and Young Rough Rider Weekly (Ted Strong) post cards. Round-Up mem-

bers passing through Oklahoma City should do well to stop long enough to visit this place. It is very interesting, indeed.

Both Look Magazine and the Sat Eve Post in past years had lengthy stories on the career of J. R. Williams and he was also the subject of an article in Time Magazine. All these journals lauded him as being one of the peer workers in his chosen field of art. In the Sunday comics for a long while in addition to his daily comic box "Out Our Way" for a standard half-page chronicled the doings of a family known as "The Willets," but I have been told this feature was drawn by some one other than Williams.

When Williams died in 1957 he had quite a stock of drawings ahead. When these were exhausted he was succeeded by his understudy. But this man's philosophy and trend in drawing was unlike that of Jim Williams and I more or less lost interest. However the understudy doesn't keep up with the pace of Williams and a lot of the drawings of the latter are still being reprinted along with the newer cartoons, and I am still enjoying Williams' cartoons over and over again. Some have been reprinted as many as two times.

But Jim Williams wasn't the only artist to use the dime novel theme for an occasional interesting cartoon. Claire Briggs in his "The Days of Real Sport," in the New York Tribune back in 1925 shows two boys languidly resting in "the hay mow in the lee of the old barn and a cold autumn rain falling," one of the boys resting with hands back of head, and the other reading "Golden Days." In one of H. T. Webster's drawings in his "The Thrill That comes Once In a Lifetime" printed in 1930 he has three boys in their clubhouse, one of them being "Jesse James, who, on hearing the password pulls the latchstring that admits Cole Younger, the Dalton boys and Billy the Kid into the bandits' lair. Gaar Williams, in his cartoon feature "Among The Folks In History," now and then gave us a

good one. It has already been told of the full page painting in the Denver Post in 1930 by Paul Gregg that shows Young Wild West and his pards riding over the hill and waving us a fond adieu. Truly a remarkable picture reminding us that all our dime novel heroes have long ago "Gone West."

Possibly the most interesting cartoon in my whole lot is the one by Webster printed May 10, 1930, titled "The Literary Feast," and told about in detail by our departed member W. B. McCafferty in our own Round-Up No. 1, for January, 1931. Mr. McCafferty describes the drawing of the boy in the hay mow in the barn, that gives us the titles of three Young Wild Wests, (imaginary, of course), two of the Old King Bradys in Secret Service, and in Work & Win there is Fred Fearnot In Manila, and six new Pluck & Lucks! Wow! The face of the boy in the hay gazing in awe and wonder at his "treasures" is one to behold, one of pleased satisfaction. The face of what easily could have been that of each of the rest of us more than 60 years ago.

A "slam" at Frank Merriwell was taken in a Sat Eve Post drawing on their humor page January 21, 1939, when Frank in a close skating race plunged through the ice and swam and skated to victory over his opponents. The caption, "Nothing daunts Merriwell. He doesn't know the meaning of the word quit!" Our present day Jimmy Hatlo in his feature "They'll Do It Every Time" and still being drawn satirizes Merriwell in the winning of football games, three separate drawings of which I have. In one of them he names Frank as "Merriwhelp!". A six-block cartoon in the Boston Herald of May 29, 1962 is Frank Merriwell in theme. The drawing, by Dahl, compares Frank to the Horatio Alger heroes, and then compares Frank and the Alger boys to Astronauts Glenn and Carpenter. And then all are compared to Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, etc. In a cartoon of 1951, "Whee! The People" as his mother starts to enter the

room a young boy is shown thrusting "Nick Dare" which he holds in his hand rapidly under his bed covering, saying: "Gee Whillikens! I don't want ma t' ketch me reading this dime novel!" Major Hoople in some of the cartoons on him in "Our Boarding House" astounds all his listeners by telling how he solved the mysteries of several gruesome murders in the past, by repeating what he had read in dime novels.

Adults were not free of criticism of what they read and wishing to keep the fact hidden. In a drawing by Reg Manning, Johnny is shown outside the door approaching the room, ball and glove in hand gayly whistling a tune. Mother, inside is saying: "I wouldn't want my children to see me reading this best seller," at the same time putting inside the dresser drawer, the book of "Filth Fiction—All The Four Letter Words, etc." (And well she may.) In another drawing grown-up daughter Flora is shown hiding a copy of "Trilby" under the bed covering as there is a knock from mother on the door.

Believe It Or Not and Strange As It Seems cartoons I have feature Gilbert Patten, Frederick van Rensselaer Day, Col. Prentiss Ingraham, Buffalo Bill Cody, Wm. Mathewson, Joaquin Murrieta, Billy the Kid, Edward Stratemeyer and "Old Grizzly Adams, the Bear-Tamer."

Newest dime novel cartoon in my lot is one from New York Daily News of May 24, 1966, sent me by Ralph Adimare. Drawn by the pen of Bruce Stark, it shows young America wide-eyedly reading "The Adventures Of Frank Merriwell" by Burt L. Standish" and exclaiming "Gee, just like Ralph Houk!". At the beginning of the 1966 baseball season, the Yankees had high hopes for getting out of their slump of the previous year and winning the American League pennant. But, alas! Ralph didn't have what it took like Frank Merriwell did and the Yanks finished in the cellar for the first time in more than half a century.

It is not to be imagined I have all the cartoons on dime novels that have

appeared in the past, only the few that have come my way. To this end I ask all Round-Uppers who have any of this stuff or who may come into possession of it in the future, and not wishing to save it, send it along to yours truly. I am almost 100 per cent disabled and get quite a kick in viewing it and pasting it away in my scrap book of Merriwelliana. This applies also to any newspaper or magazine articles on the Merriwells, Tip Top Weekly and Gilbert Patten (Burt L. Standish). And for that matter, any other data on dime novels.

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180. Haverford College Library, Haverford, Pa. 19041
181. John M. Burke, 3950 20th St., San Francisco, Calif. 94114
182. State University of New York, Agricultural and Technical Institute, Morrisville, N. Y. 13408
183. Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, N. Y. 11238
184. Martin J. Padgett, 908 Third St., Elizabeth City, N. C. 27909
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186. Arthur N. Carter, 28½ Pine St., Attleboro, Mass. 02703
187. Jack Herman, 344 Cherry Place, East Meadow, N. Y. 11554
188. H. J. Ryan, Box 281, Nashville, Tenn. 37202
189. J. Randolph Cox, 514½ W. Third St., Northfield, Minn. 55057
190. Leo F. Moore, 16412 Gentry Lane, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92647
191. Joseph P. Wadleck, 41 Kingsgate Road, Snyder (Buffalo), N. Y. 14226
192. Harriett Crawford Richardson, Box 1005, Socorro, N. Mex. 87801
193. L. Harding, 172 Concord St., Portland, Me. 04103
194. P. B. Marchenkoff, 18 Melody Lane RFD #4, Norwich, Conn. 06360
195. A. E. Vogt, 523 N. Orange Ave., Monterey Park, Calif. 91754
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199. John Riley, 132 Livingston St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11201
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211. R. B. Hudson, Box 378, Dallas, Ga. 30132
212. Joseph R. Chenu, 16 Farragut Road, Merrick, N. Y. 11566
213. Detroit Public Library, Rare Books, Per., 5201 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48202
214. William H. Petrecca, 2026 Delancey St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103
215. Peter Van Note, 114 East 90th St., New York, N. Y. 10028
216. Howard Funk, 5936 North Kostner Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60646
217. Marcus Cook Connelly, 25 Central Park, West, New York, N. Y. 10023
218. Northern Illinois University, Swen F. Parson Library, Periodicals Dept., DeKalb, Ill. 60115
219. Thomas J. Mulcahy, 74 Edgewater Road, Hull, Mass. 02045
220. R. H. Porter, Box 38, Austin, Texas 78767
221. Jack W. Row, Clarion, Iowa 50525
222. Daniel J. Fuller, 1118 Catalpa Circle, Madison, Wis. 53713
223. Harry Pulfer, Box 526, La Crescenta, Calif. 91014
224. American Antiquarian Society, Salisbury Ct. and Park Ave., Worcester, Mass. 01609
225. Charles A. Shepherd, 1020 Milton Road, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15234
226. Gus Krause, 2202 Bennett Ave., Chattanooga, Tenn. 37404
227. Glenn Shirley, Box 824, Stillwater, Okla. 74074
228. Baltimore County Public Library, 25 West Chesapeake Ave., Towson, Md. 21204
229. Louis H. Dreyer, 2615 New York Drive, Pasadena, Calif. 91107
230. J. Leonard Jennewein, Dakota Wesleyan Univ., Mitchell, S. Dak. 57301
231. Andy Zerhe, Box 6206, Montgomery, Ala. 36106
232. Univ. of California Library, Acquisitions Dept., Riverside, Calif. 92502
233. Paul Homel, 126 North 6th St., Lafayette, Ind. 47901
234. Louis Mitchell, 16 Chesslee Road, East Hartford, Conn. 06108
235. Univ. of California Library, Dept. of Special Collections, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024
236. Allan P. Kirby, 17 DeHart St., Morristown, N. J. 07960
237. Dr. V. L. Jones, Atlanta Univ. School of Library Services, 273 Chestnut St. S. W., Atlanta, Ga. 30314
238. Lloyd W. Currey, c/o J. S. Canner & Co., 618 Parker St., Roxbury, Mass. 02120
239. American Book Collector, 1822 School St., Chicago, Ill. 60657
240. Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, Order Dept., 8th and Vince Sts., Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
241. Richard Leekley, Box 337, Winthrop Harbor, Ill. 60096
242. F. Lisle McCormick, Box 134, Ogdensburg, N. Y. 13669
243. Univ. of Pennsylvania Liby, Acquisitions Dept., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104
244. Univ. of Louisville Library, Belknap Campus, Louisville, Ky. 40208

245. Portland State College Library, Box 1151, Portland, Ore. 97207
 246. Florida State Univ. Library, Tallahassee, Fla. 32306
 247. Stephen Press, 290 East Sidney Ave., Mt. Vernon, N. Y. 10553
 248. John C. Kunzog, 36 Norton Ave., Jamestown, N. Y. 14701
 249. Mike Barrier, 5813 Hawthorne Road, Little Rock, Ark. 72207
 250. Norman P. Zaichick, Library Services Dept. 203-D144 Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 South Cass Ave., Argonne, Ill. 60440
 251. Edward Reynolds, 47 High St., Thorndike, Mass. 01079
 252. Michael Grinet, 36 Southbridge St., c/o Odd Book Store, Worcester, Mass. 01608
 253. Iowa State Univ. Libraries, Serials Acquisitions, Iowa City, Iowa 52240
 254. John T. Dizer, Jr., RD #1, Box 611, Utica, N. Y. 13502
 255. Helen Dutcher, Box 1101, Long Beach, Calif. 90801
 256. Dr. John W. Machen, 6331 Belair Road, Baltimore, Md. 21206
 257. Judson Berry, 3801 West 41st St., Sioux Falls, S. Dak. 57105
 258. Mark V. Dievendorf, 230 Mayer St., Canajoharie, N. Y. 13317
 259. Brown University Library, Providence, R. I. 02912
 260. San Jose Public Library, San Jose, Calif. 95113

For the second consecutive year there was a substantial increase in subscriptions, a net of 30. Four members died: William H. Gander, Fred Lee, Edward Doome, and George Trefry. Twelve dropped from lack of interest or other reasons: Murray Goodman, John Cooke, J. F. Thevenon, Marc D. Nadel, John F. Nolan, A. M. McFadden, Al Urban, Paul Gaudette, Paul Berkson, Mrs. Merlene Eby, Mrs. June M. Spencer and Burt C. Van Devier. 45 new members were enrolled beginning with No. 216 above.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

The DARTMOUTH-YALE program book, Oct. 29, 1966. THE FRIENDS OF FRANK MERRIWELL CHALLENGE RED SMITH, by Charley Loftus, Director of Sports Information, Yale University. A tongue in cheek article attempting to convert Red Smith to Merriwell fandom. Red Smith recently wrote an article in his syndicated column attacking Frank Merriwell as a cheat and a "kicker of dogs." (Mr. Frank Acker sent in the above information.)

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Wide Awake Library No. 1234, stamped lightly

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Leisure Hour Library, New Series No. 59, last page worn

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